CONFERENCE OUTLINE:

The 1991 Conference on the Endothelium and Cardiovascular Function will focus on the biology, physiology, pathology, and pharmacology of the endothelial cells in relation not only to their ability to modulate the degree of contraction of the underlying smooth muscle but also to affect the function of other cell types, in particular blood cells. The conference will consist of nine scientific sessions, each with four to six speakers and a discussion leader; all will be investigators with wide experience in the endothelium and its function. In addition, a poster session will be held daily, which will allow more junior participants to present their data and discuss them with the authorities in the field. The central theme will be the ability of the endothelium to alter the amount of active factors made available to both the blood and the surrounding tissues.

The first session will deal with the signal transduction mechanisms in endothelial cells as regards the different functions of those cells. The second session will approach the role of the endothelium in contributing cytokines and, thus, participating in inflammatory responses. Session three will discuss the emerging role of the endothelium in trying to maintain the fluidity of the blood, by, providing anti-adhesion molecules as well as affecting the adhesion and aggregation of platelets and of other blood components. It also will summarize current thinking on plasminogen and anti-thrombin. Session four will try to determine the role of NO as the major EDRF, and in, particular, summarize the recent evidence describing the enzyme(s) leading to the formation of NO as well the activation of guanylate cyclase that the mediator causes. Session five will discuss the increasing number of vasoconstrictor substances that can be produced by endothelial cells and how those interact with other vasoactive molecules, in particular, EDRF

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produced by the endothelium. Session six will attempt to summarize the physiological role of EDRF and other endothelium-derived vasoactive factors, particularly at the level of microcirculation and in the control of the overall blood pressure. Session seven will examine the two major endothelium-derived vasoactive molecules, NO and endothelin, and discuss whether or not those molecules can be produced by cells other than endothelial cells and, if so, what their potential role in physiology and pathology could be at those sites. Session eight will address the issues of endothelial-growth factors, taking the approach that the endothelium is probably a key player in the transition from acute changes in vasomotor responses to more chronic establishment of hypertrophy and atroplasia. This aspect is of particular importance to understand angiogenesis and the events leading to atherosclerosis. The last session will focus particularly on the role of the endothelium in diseasea of the vascular tree and will address atherosclerosis, coronary disease, hypertension and stroke.

Listed below is the tentative program for the five days of the conference. Each of the nine sessions will be led either by one of the organizers or by outstanding scientists, each of whom has already agreed to participate. The choice of discussion leaders was made on the basis of their scientific merit and demonstrated ability to stimulate productive and yet well-focused discussions.

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